to exchange soiled, torn and mutilated notes. Specific complaints of non-implementation of this scheme by any Currency Chest branches, for whatever reasons, are followed up by RBI with the banks concerned for corrective action. However, there is no statutory ban on the profession of money changers.

हथकरघा क्षेत्र के लिए की गई रामसाही आयोग की सिफारिशें

2839. **श्री रशीद मसूद :** क्या वस्त्र मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि हथकरघा क्षेत्र में सुधार लाने के लिये रामसाही आयोग द्वारा की गई सिफारिशें सरकार को प्राप्त हो चुकी है ; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस आयोग की सिफारिशों के आधार पर सरकार द्वारा अब तक क्या-क्या कदम उठाये गये हैं और उनके फलस्वरूप प्राप्त हुए परिणामों का ब्यौरा क्या है ?

वस्त्र मंत्री (श्री राम निवास मिर्धा) : (क) और (ख) उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार ने रामसहाय आयोग की स्थापना 1972 में की थी । अतः आयोग के सिफारिशों को कार्यान्वित करना उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार के अधिकार क्षेत्र में है, उक्त सरकार ने सूचित किया है कि आयोग की हथकरघा क्षेत्र से संबंधित अधिकतर सिफारिशें पहले ही कार्यान्वित की जा चुकी हैं इन सिफारिशों के क्रिया-वयन के संबंध में उठाए गए महत्वपूर्ण कदम हैं :- अलग हथकरघा और वस्त्र निदेशालय की स्थापना, उ० प्र० हथकरघा निगम, बुनकर सहकारी मिलों और उनके संघ की स्थापना, गहन हथकरघा विकास परियोजनाएं प्रारम्भ करना, हथकरघा बुनकरो को कार्यकारी पूंजी उपलब्ध कराना, आदि ।

उत्तर प्रदेश की कपास पर आधारित इकाइयों में संकट

2840. **श्री रशीद मसूद :** क्या वस्त्र मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार का ध्यान दिनांक 19 फरवरी, 1988 के 'इंडियन एक्सप्रेस' में "यू० पी० काटन बेस्ड यूनिट्स फेसिंग इकानामिक क्राइस" शीर्षक के अन्तर्गत प्रकाशित समाचार की ओर दिलाया गया है ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस संबंध में तथ्य क्या हैं ; और

(ग) इस संकट के निवारण के लिये सरकार द्वारा क्या तात्कालिक कदम उठाये गए हैं ।

वस्त्र मंत्री (श्री राम निवास मिर्धा) : (क) ऐसा कोई समाचार दिनांक 19 फरवरी, 1988 के "इंडियन एक्सप्रेस" में प्रकाशित हुआ प्रतीत नहीं होता ।

(ख) और (ग) उपर्युक्त (क) को देखते हुए प्रश्न नहीं उठते ।

Destruction of forests due to consumption/utilisation of forest wood

2841. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) how much forest is destroyed every year in terms of area, number of trees and cubic metres of wood;

(b) how much is used as firewood, for scaffolding and other supporting activities in construction industry, for fancy applications like doors, windows and furniture and for other applications out of the above wood;

(c) how much resources in terms of money and time would be necessary for raising the same area of forests every year;

(d) whether Government are considering liberal incentives for products which substitute use of forest woods; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(e) what incentives are at present given for the efforts to increase forest area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) According to a survey carried out by the National Remote Sensing Agency using satellite imagery the rate of depletion of forest cover during the period 1972—75 to 1980—82 was about 1.3 million hectares per year. No survey has been done to specifically assess destruction of forest every year in terms of number and volume of trees.

(b) The annual timber harvest from the forests is estimated to be 13.5 million cubic metres. The recorded annual production of fuelwood from the forests is around 15 million tonnes.

(c) A sum of approximately Rs. 650 crores would be required every year for afforesting an area of 1.3 million hectares.

(d) Yes, Sir. The Central Government are giving financial incentives for setting up of biogas plants, purchase of solar cookers and improved wood burning stoves to reduce consumption of wood. The Government have also provided 100% equity for setting up a corrugated fibre board carton plant for manufacture of fruit packing cases in Himachal Pradesh.

The Central Government have given fiscal incentives in indirect taxes through concessional rates of excise duty on specified varieties of paper manufactured out of agricultural wastes and non-conventional raw materials. Excise duty has been fully exempted in kraft paper and paper board used in the manufactures of corrugated fibreboard cartons for packing apples. The government have exempted wood pulp from import duty and concessional rate of 10% basic custom duty has been prescribed for the imported wood subject to certain specifications.

(e) The incentives are given in form of subsidised seedling distribution. Some of the states are giving cash incentives for surviving seedling and reimbursement of the cost of tree planting in case of rural poor. People's participation is being encouraged through the schemes of tree patta, decentralised people's nurseries and grant-in-aid to voluntary agencies.

National awards

2842. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the norms for recommending to the President of India for the awards of honour like Padmashree to Bharat Ratna;

(b) whether Government have set up any Committee for this purpose; if so, what are the names of the members of the Committee; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that Hemant Kumar refused to accept the honour of Padmashree this year and also the names of the others who have refused the honour this year?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) to (c) Bharat Ratna is conferred by the President for exceptional services towards the advancement of Art, Literautre and Science, and in recognition of public service of the highest order. Padma Awards, i.e.